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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CODEY DIRECTS INSPECTORS TO MONITOR HOME-HEATING PRACTICES

Residents Should Remain Vigilant When Receiving Oil, Propane Deliveries

(TRENTON) – Acting Governor Richard J. Codey today directed the Division of Consumer Affairs to stand ready to protect consumers this winter in the face of rising fuel costs.

“With the rising price of home-heating fuel, we must make sure New Jerseyans are not left out in the cold this winter,” said Codey. “We will ensure that businesses are held accountable for the actual amount that they deliver and the price that they charge.”

The Division of Consumer Affairs’ Office of Weights and Measures, along with respective offices at the county and municipal levels, tests all retail liquid propane gas trucks and retail home heating oil delivery trucks on an annual basis. The inspections ensure that the fuel meters are calibrated accurately and all required equipment is present and functioning properly. Delivery receipts are also inspected to ensure compliance. A Weights and Measures’ certificate is issued to the truck owner upon inspection and must be carried on the vehicle and shown upon request to any Weights and Measures officer.

“During the coldest winter months, no one should suffer the added sting of fraudulent home heating charges,” said Attorney General Peter C. Harvey. “We encourage consumers to protect themselves by following these common-sense tips to protect against over billing or under-delivery.”

To ensure that home heating oil and propane meters are functioning properly, a state-wide task force inspects retail home heating oil and liquid propane gas vehicle meters, in-transit and at delivery sites, several times during the season. Inspection teams are organized geographically to cover North, Central and South Jersey on a continuing basis.

The State Office of Weights and Measures will also conduct an additional task force operation to check retail propane gas meters, including re-weighing of bottled gas intended for sale at propane filling stations, in transit and at delivery sites.

“Unfortunately, old man winter doesn’t pay his own heating bills - New Jersey consumers do,” said Consumer Affairs Director Kimberly Ricketts. “Since the energy crisis in the 1970s, Consumer Affairs has made it a priority to protect consumers and ensure they are not being overcharged with each fuel delivery.”

Tips for Consumer Protection

Specifically, consumers should take the following steps to protect themselves when receiving home heating oil or propane deliveries this winter:

- Request a specific date for delivery of home heating oil or propane and be home at the time of delivery.
- Make sure the meter registers reads zero before the delivery begins.
- At the end of the delivery, compare the delivered gallons printed on the ticket with the gallons indicated on the meter register. They should match.
- Request to include the price per gallon on the delivery ticket. When you receive your bill, compare the ticket price against the billing price. They should match.
- Make sure you receive a delivery ticket issued upon the completion of a delivery that includes the gallons automatically printed by the metering device, not hand written.
- Inspect every delivery ticket for the following information: date, name and address of the seller, your name and address, grade of fuel oil if relevant and the signature of the person making the delivery. This information will be necessary if you want to make any reports or file a complaint.
- *For oil deliveries only:* Ask your oil company to provide you with a tank chart that matches your storage tank so you can keep your own records. To monitor the contents of your tank when you are not present for a delivery, purchase a dip stick at least eight feet long with a resolution of 1/4" x 1". Measure your tank before and after delivery, note the readings on your chart and compare those readings against the delivery ticket for accuracy.

To contact the Division of Consumer Affairs to investigate a company or to report delivery scams or fraudulent activity, please call the State Office of Weights and Measures, located in Avenel, at (732) 815-4840. or log onto <http://www.njconsumeraffairs.com>. The State Office can also provide you with a telephone number and contact name for your municipal or county office of Weights and Measures.

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